



**TESTIMONY OF WILL WARREN**  
**Economic Development Project Manager**  
**REGIONAL ECONOMIC XCELLERATION (REX) DEVELOPMENT**  
**Before the**  
**COMMERCE COMMITTEE**  
**March 8, 2011**

Re: Raised Bill No. 6526: An Act Concerning Brownfield Remediation and Development as an Economic Driver

Thank you for this opportunity to testify before the Commerce Committee in support of Section 17 of House Bill Number 6525, "An Act concerning Brownfield Remediation and Development as an Economic Driver." As the primary goal in Section 17 of the Bill, REX development recognizes the need to expedite the process of Brownfield redevelopment for the State of Connecticut, however, also strongly recommends eliminating the conditions in Section 17 subsection (b) of the House Bill as a potential obstacle to the goal of a more efficient remediation process. The two conditions referenced are, limitation of participation in the program to 20 properties at any one time and the addition of social and economic criteria to applicant eligibility determination.

REX Development is the 501 (c)(4) quasi-governmental economic development organization serving 15 towns in the South Central Connecticut Region. Identifying the extreme need for Brownfield redevelopment in this industrious region, soon after the inception of REX in 1996 the organization created a Brownfield Assessment and Remediation Program with the initial infusion of funding from the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development. Since the creation, and the addition of State and Federal funding, REX has assisted with the assessment, cleanup and remediation of over 80 properties throughout the region.

REX has worked with municipalities, non-profits and for profit developers to help them leverage their assessment and clean-up activities, in turn creating jobs, economic viability and overall sustainability in the region. Coincidentally, REX has consistently seen additional bureaucratic requirements and delays associated with the Transfer Act as well as uncertainties regarding liabilities for conditions on these sites, become a major hindrance for the redevelopment process. Section 17 of House Bill 6525 would significantly reduce any concerns associated with liability issues in accordance with the remediation of a property. The components in Section 17 of the bill suggest a comprehensive and concise pathway to a clear and defining end point regarding liability, avoiding sometimes costly and unreasonable delays.

As you are well aware, Connecticut towns are more reliant on property tax revenues than all but two other states. With the recent housing and economic decline, REX has seen a considerable decrease in the number of projects that municipalities can afford to redevelop. It is the private sector that has the current financial resources necessary to revitalize our communities and create jobs and wealth. In this regard, it is important to spur private development without the use of public funds. Section (b) of the bill, however, will further impede the goal of a comprehensive process to encourage investment.

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Language referring to a limit of 20 properties should be removed, allowing as many properties as possible to take part in the program. Especially in a time of economic uncertainty, we should be encouraging the investment of remediation not focusing on a select few. In addition, language referring to additional criteria for eligibility should be removed. Including these economic, planning and job creation elements could potentially exclude a multitude of smaller properties in the smaller communities of our region, that are just as important to improving the health and overall sustainability.

Overall, this bill is a thoughtful and innovative effort to attract private investment and expedite what is sometimes a convoluted and frustrating process. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify before you today. We hope that you will take our comments into consideration.

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